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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/877,926	06/08/2001	Paul H. Robb	23424-016	2458

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EXAMINER

BASHORE, ALAIN L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3624

DATE MAILED: 12/03/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/877,926

Applicant(s)

ROBB, PAUL H.

Examiner

Alain L. Bashore

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 October 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-56 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-56 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 4.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1- 56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In the independent claims there is recited terms that are indefinite because there is no clear definition of the meets and bounds of the term. There terms include: “collaborate”, “enabling”, “to interact”, “forum”.

In dependant claims there is recited: “events” and “actions” which are also terms that are indefinite because there is no clear definition of the meets and bounds of the term.

The terms “client” and “participants” are confusing since the relationship between the two is not recited (i.e.: are the participants clients of the client?).

The term “library of resources” is vague and indefinite since the entire Internet could be defined as such.

The recitations of claims 4 and 18 are confusing as a whole because the interrelationships claimed are not clear.

All claims will be examined as best understood.

All dependant claims that are not vague and indefinite are rejected because they are encompassing a rejected independent claim.

Claims 28-54 recite "system" which is vague and indefinite since a system may be one of several different statutory classes of invention (including a method or an apparatus). Applicant must indicate on the record what statutory class of invention the system claims belong to. For the purposes of this examination these claims are considered apparatus.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

4. Claims 1-27, 55-56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as non-statutory.

The method claims as presented do not claim a technological basis in the body of the claim. Without a claimed basis, the claim may be interpreted in an alternative as involving no more than a manipulation of an abstract idea and therefore non-statutory under 35 U.S.C. 101. In contrast, a method claim that includes in the body of the claim at least one structural / functional interrelationship which can only be computer implemented is considered to have a technological basis [See Ex parte Bowman, 61

USPQ2d 1669, 1671 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 2001) – used only for content and reasoning since not precedential].

The term “tool” may be an abstraction.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1-5, 7-19, 22-32, 34-46, 49-54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zucknovich et al.

Zucknovich et al discloses a method for providing a tool with which a client and one or more participants may interact. A client defines a collaboration team comprising one or more participants (col 1, lines 50-56). The client submits client data to the tool in a common format (col 5, lines 60-67). The participants comprise one or more entities authorized by the client to participate in the tool, wherein the client also defines the scope of authorization for each participant (col 6, lines 25-30). The client interacts with one or more participants through the tool, wherein interaction among participants comprises exchange of client data (col 87, lines 14-50). The participants may be financial advisors (col 5, lines 55-56).

The client data comprises financial documents as a work product (col 2, lines 41-50). There is enabled the client to access a client history database wherein the client history database maintains information related to previous actions (col 83, lines 26-45). A library of resources is disclosed since there is taught access to the Internet.

Zucknovich et al does not use the word "forum" to describe what their tool provides.

It would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art to include a common "forum" as describing the tool to Zucknovich et al because Zucjnovich teaches that research providers require interaction with those who desire their work product (col 1, lines 39-44).

7. Claims 6, 20-21 , 33, 47-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zucknovich et al as applied to claims 1-5, 7-19, 22-32, 34-46, 49-54 above, and further in view of Moran.

Zucknovich et al does not disclose a calendar function or planning means for enabling participant to formulate a financial plan.

Moran discloses a calendar function (fig 37) and a planning means for enabling participant to formulate a financial plan (col 1, lines 21-30).

It would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art to include a calendar function to Zucknovich et al because Moran teaches that planning requires knowing timelessness for answering planning questions (col 32, lines 11-30).

It would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art to include planning means for enabling participant to formulate a financial plan to Zucknovich et al because Moran teaches that financial advisors provide financial planning (col 1, lines 25-26) and Zucknovich et al teaches advisors.

8. Claims 55-56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zucknovich et al as applied to claims 1 above, and further in view of Carter.

Zucknovich et al does not disclose use of "encryption".

Carter discloses encryption of documents (fig 11).

It would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art to include encryption to Zucknovich et al because Carter teaches encryption advantages to control access of documents (col 4, lines 1-18).

Double Patenting

9. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to

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prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

10. Claims 1-56 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-37 of copending Application No. 09/732,008. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because:

A "forum" encompasses a "collaboration tool" and a "library of resources" encompasses a "database".

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alain L. Bashore whose telephone number is 703-308-1884. The examiner can normally be reached on about 7:00 am to 4:30 pm (Monday thru Thursday).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vincent Millin can be reached on 703-308-1065. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-305-7687.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-1113.


Alain L. Bashore